

Remarks

This response is in reply to a third non-final office action that was mailed on April 21, 2005.

In the office action, the examiner objected to claim 9, and rejected (a) claim 12 as being anticipated by Tappel and (b) claims 1-8, 10-11 and 13-17 as being rendered obvious by Tappel in view of Luff et al. Applicant appreciates the time and effort that the examiner has obviously put into this new non-final office action. The applicant, however, respectfully transgresses the rejection.

Applicant has amended claim 12 to overcome the broad interpretation of Tappel. The amendment incorporates a portion of the language of claim 13 into claim 12. That means, we will discuss only the second rejection in this response.

Tappel discloses a NON-CONVERSION, self-contained mattress. A Non-Conversion mattress remains in a single plane, and has no notches in the mattress (as present in conversion mattresses) that can kink hoses that protrude from one end of the bed to the other. Tappel also discloses a single dispersion unit (manifold and valves) in the foot section of the mattress and nowhere else in the mattress. The examiner incorrectly identifies item 113 as a dispersion unit. At column 5, lines 9-10; Tappel unequivocally identifies item 113 as an "L-shaped tube." Tubes are conduits (see Merriam-Webster's Online dictionary and thesaurus that confirms conduits, pipes and tubes are synonymous). Moreover, the presently claimed invention (in the independent claims) clearly and unambiguously distinguishes dispersion units from conduits (tubes) when it calls for

at least one **dispersion unit** in each section and each dispersion unit provides a fluid, obtained from the fluid source, to a **conduit** which directs the fluid into the inflatable bladder positioned in the section of the dispersion unit;

Pursuant to the claim language, a dispersion unit is not and is never just a conduit and/or tube. Accordingly, the examiner's broad interpretation to define a mere tube device as a dispersion unit is improper.

There is also not one teaching, disclosure or suggestion that Tappel's mattress can ever be used as a conversion mattress as claimed. No where does Tappel teach, suggest or disclose that his system can solve and/or address at least the kinking hose problem that is present with conventional conversion mattresses – one which is disclosed by Luff et al.

Luff et al. disclose a conventional conversion, NON-SELF-CONTAINED mattress. The mattress has an air bladder that extends from the foot to the head section of the mattress (king sized mattresses have two air bladders placed side-by-side from the foot to the head section). See figure 2 and column 3, lines 14-33 of the '065 patent to Luff et al. The mattress overlies a frame. Attached to the frame are control circuitry, a dispersion unit that directs air through conduits that are interconnected to the air bladders. As illustrated in figures 1- 5, the frame and the frame's components are not within the mattress. That means, Luff et al. fail to disclose a self-contained mattress as claimed.

As previously stated in prior responses, the self-contained mattress of the presently claimed invention has a head section and a foot section and is able to adjust from a horizontal (or inclined) position to a chair-like conformation. The self-contained mattress also has at least one

bladder(s) and at least one dispersion unit in each section. The self-contained mattress also has a control system in at least one of the sections and is interconnected to each dispersion unit. The bladders, the dispersion units, and the control system are all within the self-contained mattress.

Luff et al. fail to disclose, teach, or suggest any semblance of a self-contained, convertible mattress. Moreover, the examiner is unable to find any reference that discloses, suggests, or teaches a conversion mattress being self-contained. Why this failure of references even though the examiner believes it is obvious to incorporate the convertible functions into a non-convertible, self-contained mattress? Applicants believe this failure is because no one has previously been able to solve the kinking problem between the head section and the foot section that is normally in self-contained, convertible mattresses.

The claimed invention solves the kinking problem as set forth in the independent claims.

1. A stand alone integrated mattress comprising:
 - a self-contained mattress unit having at least a head section and a foot section, and capable of converting from a horizontal position or an inclined position to a chair-like conformation;
 - at least one inflatable bladder in each section of the self-contained mattress unit;
 - at least one fluid source;
 - at least one dispersion unit in each section and each dispersion unit provides a fluid, obtained from the fluid source, to a conduit which directs the fluid into the inflatable bladder positioned in the section of the dispersion unit;
 - a control system positioned in one of the sections and interconnected to each dispersion unit to control the dispersion of the fluid to the inflatable bladders in each section.

Notice that the independent claims call for (1) at least a first dispersion unit in the head section of the self-contained, convertible mattress; (2) at least a second dispersion unit in the foot section of the self-contained, convertible mattress; and (3) at least one control system positioned in either the foot or head section of the self-contained, convertible mattress. Neither Tappel nor Luff et al. disclose, teach or suggest any device that has these three items, as claimed.

The other cited references were relied upon by the examiner for different purposes than the failings set forth above. Moreover, none of the cited references disclose the instant invention or any self-contained conversion mattress unit as claimed. Accordingly, we will not address these references in this response.

In view of this response, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is now in condition for allowance and that such allowance is earnestly requested.